

Devils Lake Quick Facts

- The Devils Lake basin is a 3,810 square-mile sub-basin of the Red River of the North. Although it lies entirely within the Red River Basin, at current water levels it has no natural outlet. Since glaciation, Devils Lake has naturally fluctuated from dry to overflowing.
- As of April 27, 2005, Devils Lake is at 1448.5 feet above mean sea level (amsl). This is only slightly below its recent record high level of 1449.1 feet amsl on May 12, 2004.
- Devils Lake spills into Stump Lake at elevation 1446.5 amsl. As of April 27, 2005, water from Devils Lake is flowing into Stump Lake at a rate of over 200 cubic feet per second (cfs). Once Stump Lake rises to the same elevation as Devils Lake from its April 27, 2005, level of 1426.5 feet amsl, which will likely happen within the next two years, Devils and Stump Lakes will rise together until reaching about 1459 feet amsl and then will overflow into the Sheyenne and Red Rivers. This has occurred at least twice during the past 4,000 years.
- Since 1993, Devils Lake has risen nearly 25.5 feet in elevation. The volume of water in Devils Lake has quadrupled since the spring of 1993. The lake now covers over 134,000 acres. At its spill elevation, Devils Lake will cover more than 277,000 acres.
- Flooding at Devils Lake has destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses and inundated thousands of acres of productive farmland. The State of North Dakota and the U.S. Government have spent over \$450 million dollars in flood mitigation efforts including moving roads, rail and power lines, and building dikes. Other mitigation efforts have included a pilot project (now underway) to use Devils Lake water for irrigation, and plans to provide for the controlled flow of Devils Lake water to the Sheyenne River (rather than the uncontrolled flow that will occur if it is allowed to happen naturally). As of 2002, several state, and federal agencies have restored, protected, or enhanced 14,000 acres of wetlands in the basin.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) began studying the construction of an outlet from Devils Lake to the Sheyenne River in 1997. The State of North Dakota developed its own plans for an outlet when funding was not made available for the USACE project.
- The Dakota Water Resources Act of 2001 specifically prohibits an inlet to Devils Lake from the Missouri River system, thereby precluding that system as a possible source of invasive species.

- Devils Lake hosts a world-class fishery, attracting anglers from across North America and around the world. The region is also a prime habitat for many species of migratory waterfowl.
- The water from a Devils Lake outlet will flow 600 miles through North Dakota waterways, past 40 percent of the state's population, before crossing the international border.
- A natural surface water connection to the Red River basin has been documented in 1997, 2003, 2004, and 2005. At this location on the northeastern edge of the Devils Lake basin, water was documented to be flowing from the Devils Lake basin, into the Pembina (Red) River basin, at a flow of approximately 15 cfs.
- It has been asserted that two species of fish parasites are found the Devils Lake that are not found elsewhere in the Red River Basin, specifically (*Ligula intestinalis*) and (*Gyrodactilis hoffmani*). *L. intestinalis* has been reported in numerous species of fish in Canada, including those in Manitoba. *G. hoffmani* was reported in Devils Lake in 1981 and is also reported to be common in the Minnesota portions of the Red River. And although striped bass were introduced into the lake in the 1970s, they failed to thrive and reproduce. The last striped bass recorded in Devils Lake was caught in 1993.